1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

on the shores of America, affirmed that they could discover scarcely any traces of the knowledge of God amongst the Brazilians, and other savages. The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, declares that this ignorance of God is by no means devoid of blame, and indeed that it cannot be excused; *so that they are without excuse, because from the very sight of the things created, they might arrive at the knowledge of God the Creator.* But if any one think the case admits of palliation, he will say that the American savages are slow, dull, and stupid in the apprehension of things not present to their outward senses. Reasoning is a process troublesome and almost unknown to them. It is, therefore, no wonder that the contemplation of terrestrial or celestial objects should inspire them with no idea of the creative Deity, nor indeed of any thing heavenly.

821
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Travelling with fourteen Abipones, I sat down by the fire in the open air, as usual, on the high shore of the river Plata. The sky, which was perfectly serene, delighted our eyes with its twinkling stars. I began a conversation with the Cacique Ychoalay, the most intelligent of all the Abipones I have been acquainted with, as well as the most famous in war. "Do you behold," said I, "the splendour of Heaven, with its magnificent arrangement of stars? Who

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4
GUARAN
SM4

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821
771

can suppose that all this is produced by chance? The waggon, as you yourself know, is overturned, unless the oxen have some one to guide them. A boat will either sink, or go out of the right course, if destitute of a pilot. Who then can be mad enough to imagine that all these beauties of the Heavens are the effect of chance, and that the revolutions and vicissitudes of the celestial bodies are regulated without the direction of an omniscient mind? Whom do you believe to be their creator and governour? What were the opinions of your ancestors on the subject?" "My father," replied Ychoalay, readily and frankly, "our grandfathers and great grandfathers were wont to contemplate the earth alone, solicitous only to see whether the plain afforded grass and water for their horses. They never troubled themselves about what went on in the Heavens, and who was the creator and governour of the stars."

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153

I have observed the Abipones, when they are unable to comprehend any thing at first sight, soon grow weary of examining it, and cry *orqueenàm?* what is it after all? Sometimes the Guaranies, when completely puzzled, knit their brows and cry *tupá oiquaà*, God knows what it is. Since they possess such small reasoning powers, and have so little inclination to exert them, it is no wonder that they are

Neither able nor willing to argue one thing from another,